

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7048

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, MA

SUBJECT: PERIODIC AF REPORT TO SECRETARY

REF: NEWSOME LETTER DEC. 13, 1973

EMBASSY'S REQUESTED CONTRIBUTION TO PERIODIC AF REPORT TO SECRETARY FURNISHED BELOW. SUBMISSION BY POUCH WOULD NOT REACH YOU IN TIME IN VIEW ABSENCE COURIER SERVICE FROM FEB 6 UNTIL TODAY.

1. EMERGENCE OF PRO-WEST GENERAAL ANDRIAMAHAZO TO LEADERSHIP IN MADAGASCAR, FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF RAMANANTSOA GOVERNMENT AND ASSASSINATION OF HEAD OF SHORT-LIVED SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT, HAS FAVORABLE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS, ANDRIAMAHAZO IS, HOWEVER, CHALLENGED WITHIN GOVERNING MILITARY DIRECTORY BY OPPORTUNISTIC, AMBITIOUS, OFTEN PRO-RADICAL EX-FOREIGN MINISTER, COMMANDER RATSIRAKA.

2. WHILE COUTCOME OF THEIR STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF FOREIGN POLICY IS UNCERTAIN, EMBASSY BELIEVES ANDRIAMAHAZO HAS PERSONAL QUALITIES AND ULTIMATE DEGREE OF MILITARY SUPPORT WHICH GIVE HIM VERY GOOD POTENTIAL FOR BEING SUCCESSFUL. HE DOES, HOWEVER, SUFFER SOME DISADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS RATSIRAKA'S DEMAGOGY BOTH WITHIN MILITARY DIRECTORY AND AMONG NON-MILITARY GROUPS.

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3. HERE IS WHERE MATERIAL SUPPORT OF ANDRIAMHAZO BY U.S. AND OTHER FREE WORLD FRIENDS OF ANDRIAMHAZO'S PRO-WEST POLICY CAN MAKE DIFFERENCE. HIS FIRST PRIORITY IS FOR LIGHT ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO HELP ASSUAGE MILITARY CONCERN ABOUT ORDER AND SECURITY AFTER ASSASSINATION OF PREVIOUS HEAD OF STATE AND SUPPRESSION OF REBELLION BY ARMED POLICE UNIT LINKED WITH SOCIALIST PARTY. HIS REQUEST FOR PRICES AND DELIVERY DATES FRO SUCH MILITARY EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN SENT TO WASHINGTON FOR URGENT REPLY.

4. HE ALSO WANTS TO EXPAND MILITARY CIVIC ACTION AND ENGINEERING UNITS TO ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT. ECONOMIC RESUSCITATION AND GROWTH WILL ALSO REQUIRE ASSISTANCE FROM HIS FOREIGN FRIENDS IF HE IS TO BE POLITICALLY SUCCESSFUL. EMBASSY HAS OUTLINED TO HIM CERTAIN POSSIBILITIES FOR U.S. ACTION IN THIS RESPECT.

5. AT STAKE IN ANDRIAMHAZO-RATSIRAKA STRUGGLE -- AND ONE OF ITS KEY ISSUES -- IS FUTURE EXISTENCE OF THE NASA TRACKING STATION IN MADAGASCAR. STATION IS A VISIBLE FOREIGN PRESENCE THAT HAS HIGH SYMBOLIC VALUE FOR MALAGASY RADICALS. ANDRIMHAZO HAS GIVEN US PRIVATE ASSURANCE THAT STATION WILL STAY AS LONG AS HE IS IN POWER. IMMEDIATE ISSUE IS RESTORATION OF STATION'S COMMUNICATIONS TO ENABLE IT TO RESUME FUNCTIONING, WITH ANDRIAMHAZO EVIDENTLY WAITING FOR RIGHT MOMENT TO MAKE THIS DECISION.

6. ANDRIMHAZO HAS TOLD US THAT MADAGASCAR WILL HENCEFORTH BE NEUTRAL ON SOUTH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATION ISSUE IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, IN LIEU OF PREVIOUS ONE-SIDEDLY "NON-ALIGNED" POSITION IN SUPPORT OF "PRG." WE BELIEVE U.S. CAN ALSO EXPECT MORE BALANCED POSITION FROM HIM ON IMPORTANT INDIAN OCEAN ISSUES THAN SHOWN BY RAMANANTSOA GOVERNMENT. HE HAS REMINDED US OF DESIRABILITY OF HAVING FRIENDLY MADAGASCAR ASTRIDE MAIN OIL TANKER ROUTE THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL.
MENDENHALL

SECRET

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